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September 24, 2009

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"Living on a fixed income is challenging enough for seniors without sudden new premium costs cutting in to their Social Security checks," said Rep. Melancon. "The bill will keep Medicare affordable for senior citizens and give them greater security during this tough economic time."

Due to automatic provisions built into the current Medicare law, more than a quarter of the 42 million people enrolled in Medicare Part B are due to see their premiums rise to between \$110 and \$120 a month, an increase of up to 20 percent. The increase would hit new enrollees and retirees especially hard. It would also hit vulnerable state budgets, which are obligated to pay premiums for many low-income seniors.

To alleviate this unfair financial burden, the Medicare Premium Fairness Act will keep the standard Part B premium at the current 2009 rate, \$96.40 per month. Premiums are higher for individuals who earn more than \$85,000 and couples who earn more than \$170,000. Under current law, premiums are calculated each year to cover approximately 25 percent of the cost of the Medicare program.

The bill has been endorsed by the AARP, the National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare (NCPSSM), the Center for Medicare Advocacy (CMA), Alliance for Retired Americans, and the National Active and Retired Federal Employees (NARFE) Association.

The bill text is posted online [here](#) .

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